

Storm Leaves Bees, Rescuers in Sticky Predicament

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HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A violent storm that wrecked an old oak tree that housed a huge colony of bees left 10,000 dead, another 40,000 homeless, and a pair of bee enthusiasts with a sticky situation.

"I've never seen a tree that large and so filled with honey," said 80-year-old Fred Gerber of New Cumberland, who estimated more than 100 pounds of the sweet syrup was packed in the log. With fellow bee hobbyist Eu-

gene Fleming, 67, of Mechanicsburg he's worked to move the bees to a beekeeper's box.

Loggers were summoned to get rid of the remains of the 100-foot, hollowed oak on the grounds of Silver Spring Presbyterian

Church in the suburban Harrisburg township of Silver Spring. If not for Gerber and Fleming, the surviving bees would likely be exterminated to protect the loggers.

The bees resisted help at first. After the storm, which toppled their home of about eight years, they flew wildly about the tree — especially when the two rescuers took a chain saw to it, exposing the hive.

The men extracted the honey combs and egg-laden brood cells and transplanted them to a beekeeper's box in the hope that worker bees would follow.

Rogue bees from other nests swarmed over the honey encased in the hollow oak.

Gerber and Fleming said their efforts are better than the alternative.

"When we kill all the bees, we kill ourselves," said Fleming, referring to their role pollinating plants. "All life is dependent on bees."



— Associated Press

The Keeper of the Bees

Thousands of bees are lured by message-bearing chemicals, called pheromones, dabbed on beekeeper Virgil Philippi, 79, of Vancouver, Canada.

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